U.S. Application No.: 10/535,157
Amendment C
Reply to Office Action Dated February 20, 2008

Attorney Docket No: 3926.150

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims replaces any earlier listing:

1.   (currently amended) A method for sensing the surroundings in front of a road vehicle by means of a surroundings sensing system, in which surroundings data is obtained by means of a surroundings sensor, and objects are detected by processing the surroundings data, the method comprising:

defining a perception region corresponding to a partial region of a region sensed by the surroundings sensor,

defining a lane, defining a tolerance region next to said lane, and subsequently restricting the perception region to the lane and the tolerance region,

dividing the thus restricted perception region into a plurality of component-regions,

sensing surroundings within the perception region via the [[a]] surroundings sensor to obtain surroundings data,

processing the surroundings data to detect objects,

classifying the detected objects as to relevance,

assigning [[a]] an evaluation priority to each component region on the basis of the relevance of the ~~detected~~ objects detected in the component region,

subjecting each of the plurality of component regions to a ~~multi-stage~~ type of evaluation based on the evaluation priority assigned to each ~~the~~ component region ~~regions~~, and

issuing a warning to a driver of the road vehicle based on a result of the evaluation.

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2.   (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the lane is defined in that either a lane detection is carried out by image processing methods or a lane is defined by means of the data of a navigation system.

3.   (canceled)

4.   (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein, for the purpose of carrying out evaluation in the perception region, object perception is carried out by means of image processing methods.

5.   (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein, for the purpose of carrying out evaluation in the perception region, object classification is carried out by means of classification methods in order to rule out false alarms.

6.   (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 4, wherein, for the purpose of evaluation in the perception region, the distance from detected objects is determined in order to be able to provide information about obstacles in good time.

7.   (previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein, for the purpose of carrying out evaluation in the perception region by means of tracking methods, the movement of objects is sensed in order to perceive whether their direction of movement corresponds to the vehicle's own movement.

8.   (canceled)

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9.   (previously presented)   The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the surroundings
sensing system, is an infrared night vision system.

10.   (previously presented) A method for sensing the surroundings in front of a road vehicle
by means of a surroundings sensing system, in which surroundings data is obtained by
means of a surroundings sensor, and objects are detected by processing the surroundings
data, the method comprising:

      defining a perception region corresponding to a partial region of a region sensed
by the surroundings sensor,

      defining a lane, defining a tolerance region next to the lane, and subsequently
restricting the perception region to the lane and the tolerance region,

      dividing the thus restricted perception region into a plurality of component-
regions,

      assigning a priority to each component region,

      subjecting component regions to a multi-stage evaluation based on the evaluation
priority assigned to the component regions, and

      issuing a warning to a driver of the road vehicle based on a result of the
evaluation.

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